

*The Future of the American Negro* · 1899

hope of becoming a voter would take away from one-third the citizens of the Gulf States their interest in government and their stimulant to become tax-payers or to secure education, and thus be able and willing to bear their share of the cost of education and government, which now weighs so heavily upon the white tax-payers of the South. The more the Negro is stimulated and encouraged, the sooner will he be able to bear a larger share of the burdens of the South. We have recently had before us an example, in the case of Spain, of a government that left a large portion of its citizens in ignorance, and neglected their highest interests.

As I have said elsewhere, there is no escape through law of man or God from the inevitable: —

“The laws of changeless justice bind  
Oppressor with opprest;  
And, close as sin and suffering joined,  
We march to fate abreast.”

“Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South or one-third its intelligence and progress. We shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding, every effort to advance the body politic.”

My own feeling is that the South will gradually reach the point where it will see the wisdom and the justice of enacting an educational or property qualification, or both, for voting, that shall be made to apply honestly to both races. The industrial development of the Negro in connection with education and Christian character will help to hasten this end. When this is done, we shall have a foundation, in my opinion, upon which to build a government that is honest and that will be in a high degree satisfactory to both races.

I do not suffer myself to take too optimistic a view of the conditions in the South. The problem is a large and serious one, and will require the patient help, sympathy, and advice of our most patriotic citizens, North and South, for years to come. But I believe that, if the principles which I have tried to indicate are followed, a solution of the question will come. So long as the Negro is permitted to get education, acquire property, and secure employ-